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### UM lands multimillion NIH grant for research center

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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This release is available electronically on INN (News Net.)

Oct. 11, 2000

**Contact:** Richard Bridges, pharmaceutical sciences, (406) 243-4972.

### **UM LANDS MULTIMILLION NIH GRANT FOR RESEARCH CENTER**

**MISSOULA --**

The University of Montana will establish a new center for the study of brain function and disease, thanks to a start-up grant from the National Institutes of Health that will provide about \$7 million over the next five years.

"This is a huge award in terms of dollars and impact," UM pharmaceutical sciences Professor Richard Bridges said. "It may be the largest research contract NIH has ever awarded in Montana."

The award to UM is one of 19 funded through the NIH Institutional Development Award (IDeA) Program to increase biomedical research among academic and research institutions in states that have not fully participated before in NIH funding. As a grantee, UM will expand its research capacity by establishing a Center of Biomedical Research Excellence focused on investigating the way brain cells function at the biochemical level and how those functions change following injury or disease, such as stroke or Alzheimer's.

UM already has several active neuroscientists, strong clinical ties with the Montana Neuroscience Institute at St. Patrick Hospital in Missoula and ongoing projects with

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researchers in laboratories at Montana State University in Bozeman and the McLaughlin Research Institute in Great Falls. These were the core components needed “to develop a center proposal that would have a statewide impact,” Bridges said.

The grant will provide funding to buy new equipment, hire scientists doing cutting-edge research, recruit and train top graduate students and increase neuroscience course work and research opportunities for undergraduates, he said

“Biomedical research is an important and growing strength on this campus,” he said. “This is an important step in taking our programs to the next level and being recognized nationally as a university that is committed to contributing to advances in biomedical research.

“This type of research also is what links the University with biotech industries. The establishment of this center opens up the possibility for collaborations with corporations and hospitals and stronger partnerships with the National Institutes of Health.”

UM President George Dennison, the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences teamed up to produce the grant-winning proposal.

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